



16 December, 2024

## Newcastle Building Society makes branches work on high streets in Hartlepool and Middlesbrough with investment into face-to-face financial services

**Newcastle Building Society has provided a much-needed boost to two of its local communities with a six-figure investment into its Middlesbrough and Hartlepool branches, bucking the national trend of closures and improving access to face-to-face financial services in both towns.**

Customers, colleagues and community groups gathered at the Society's Hartlepool branch last week, to celebrate its opening following a two-month refurbishment. Hartlepool Mayor, Cllr. Carole Thompson cut the ribbon to declare the branch officially open alongside the Mayor's Consort Cllr. Phil Holbrook, Hartlepool Labour MP, Jonathan Brash, Leader of Hartlepool Borough Council, Cllr. Brenda Harrison, Newcastle Building Society's chief executive, Andrew Haigh and Hartlepool branch manager, Carrieanne Wilford.

In Middlesbrough, colleagues threw open the doors to the Society's new branch in the same week, following its relocation on Linthorpe Road in the town centre, a short walk from its previous premises. Like Hartlepool, the new Middlesbrough branch also features the latest in branch design and accessibility, in a more prominent town centre location.

Following the investment, both branches now include a dedicated new 'community' space. More than half of Newcastle Building Society branches now include these free-to-use spaces, offering local groups a place to meet in the heart of the community. The spaces are one way in which the Society's branches build relationships and engage with their communities, creating value beyond its products and services.

Despite the national trend in bank branch closures, Newcastle Building Society has continued to invest in its branch network by improving and increasing its number of branches across the region. Over recent years, the Society has opened branches in several new locations by sharing space in community hubs, and helping to restore access to financial services in places where banks have left town.

It's a strategy that is working for the Society, which is outperforming the market average for savings balances. Its branch savings balances have grown at a rate of more than double the whole of the market average.

Andrew Haigh, chief executive officer at Newcastle Building Society said: "Access to face-to-face financial services and advice remains a concern to our customers as a steady flow of banks continue to close their doors. We're committed to listening to our customers and so

we're delighted to make long-term commitments to Middlesbrough and Hartlepool with these investments.

“Whilst these two new branches are great for our customers, who will benefit immediately from better facilities, it's also important to be available in the way our communities need us, tomorrow and for generations to come. We offer choice for customers – whether they want a digital experience, or a trusted, friendly face on our high streets for those times when a branch is best.

“The response we've had in both towns shows how much people value their branch and we know the benefits of a branch go far beyond the transactions that take place at the counter. It's great to see people responding to our commitment to branches, with branch savings balances growing and customer satisfaction consistently high.”

Jonathan Brash, Hartlepool Labour MP, said: “It is brilliant to see Newcastle Building Society showing this level of commitment to Hartlepool. All too often we have seen high street branches close, which leaves too many people isolated from financial services. Newcastle Building Society are reversing that trend and investing in communities like ours, which I warmly welcome. We need to rebuild and renew our high streets and this is an important step on that journey.”

Since 2015, more than 6,100 bank branches have closed across the UK, including several in the North East, forcing customers to travel miles to get to their nearest branch and making it harder for some people to manage their money.

Other branch investments by Newcastle Building Society in 2024 include a new branch in Pickering, North Yorkshire, and a new community partnership branch in North Shields. Future investment for the Society includes work on a new flagship community branch in Newcastle city centre, and a collaboration with North Tyneside Council to open a new branch in Tynemouth Library, following planned redevelopment.

For more information on Newcastle Building Society and its commitment to branches visit [www.newcastle.co.uk](http://www.newcastle.co.uk)

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## About Newcastle Building Society

Newcastle Building Society is the biggest building society in the North East, with a network of 32 branches and assets of more than £6.2bn. We've been here for our members for over 160 years.

As a leading local employer, we're committed to growing our region's talent and being a great place to work where people can realise their potential. We hold Platinum IIP. We are a Real Living Wage employer and were the first building society in the UK to become an accredited Living Pension employer earlier this year. We have been named Regional Building Society of the Year for eight consecutive years from 2017 – 2024 by What Mortgage? and also won Best Overall Personal Finance Brand at the Personal Finance Awards for two years running 2023/24 and 2024/25. In 2024 Newcastle Building Society became the first UK business to receive international accreditation for mutual value measurement, recognising our ongoing commitment to creating value for our members and communities.

We help people to own their home, to save and to plan their finances through our range of products and services. We believe in the role of the high street at the heart of our communities and, as our branch network grows, we are increasingly proactive in making financial information and financial advice accessible across our regions.

Financial Advice is provided through our Newcastle Financial Advisers Limited subsidiary. Face-to-face financial advice is available at each of the Society's 32 branches. For the third year running, Newcastle Financial Advisers has been awarded Top Rated Firm status by VouchedFor - the UK's leading review site for Financial Advisers.

We're dedicated to helping our communities make positive changes; since 1995 the financial support through grants and donations from the Newcastle Building Society Community Fund at the Community Foundation to benefit local causes has surpassed £1.7m. Our total community contributions in 2023, made up of grants, match funding, and our ongoing partnership donations, was more than £350,000.

Newcastle Building Society is committed to creating a culture of belonging, where people can bring their whole self to work and be respected and valued for who they are. Our colleague-run networks include the Race Network, LGBTQ+ Network the Disability and Awareness Network, Women in Leadership Network, Menopause Network and Parent and Carers Network, all of which help steer Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy within the organisation.

[www.newcastle.co.uk](http://www.newcastle.co.uk)

Newcastle Building Society Principal Office: 1 Cobalt Park Way, Cobalt Business Park, NE28 9EJ.

Newcastle Building Society is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. Newcastle Building Society is entered in the Financial Services Register under number 156058. You can check this on the Financial Services Register or by contacting the Financial Conduct Authority on 0800 111 6768.